

Miss Mary Ann & Margaret P. 321

ARCHIVE

LITERARY ST. LOUIS



A-0321

*St. Louis Local History
Neighborhoods & Places
Literary St. Louis
Box 1, Folder 3*

LITERARY ST. LOUIS

NOTED AUTHORS AND ST. LOUIS LANDMARKS ASSOCIATED WITH THEM

ASSOCIATES OF ST. LOUIS UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES, INC.

and

LANDMARKS ASSOCIATION OF ST. LOUIS, INC.

September, 1969

Drawings by W. Philip Cotton, Jr.

Front cover: Eugene Field House, 634 S. Broadway, St. Louis

Copyright 1969 Associates of St. Louis University Libraries, Inc.
Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc.

INTRODUCTION

St. Louis has a surprising list of authors among native sons and daughters as well as later arrivals.

Some gained world fame by their writings. Others, already famous, left memoirs of their achievements. Still others were local household words, but unknown elsewhere. The fame of some has endured; that of others declined, in spite of the quality of their writing.

Native St. Louisans moved elsewhere and gained fame. Other writers came here from elsewhere to do some of their best work. Still others had a brief stay in our city then went on to literary fame some place else. Several world-famous writers visited the area and left memorable descriptions of places and personalities.

The writings of so many men and women in these various categories abound today that a rather arbitrary selection had to be made. The editors of this booklet could have chosen any of a hundred names except for the limitations of time and space. These limitations also prevent the inclusion of many fine writers in many fields who are working in St. Louis currently, especially those working within the framework of the academic communities of the two great universities and many fine colleges in the area.

THE COMMITTEE

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*Writing and
Research* W. Philip Cotton, Jr.

Gerald T. Dunne

The Rev. William B. Faherty, S.J.

Mrs. W. MacLean Johnson

Mrs. Paul W. Tredway (*editor*)

Assistance

George Brooks

Mrs. Dorothy Neuman

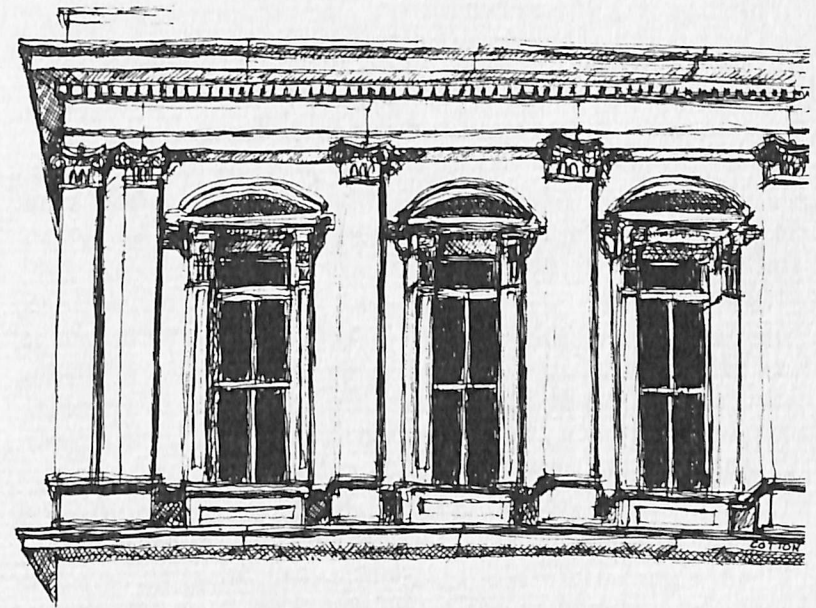
Kenneth T. O'Connor

The Rev. Walter Ong, S.J.

William G. Pettus

Mercantile Library

St. Louis Public Library Reference Dept.



SECOND FLOOR, OLD POST OFFICE, 9TH & OLIVE

ZOE AKINS—1886-1958

Zoe Akins began her long writing career in St. Louis. After attending Hosmer Hall she became secretary to her father, the postmaster of St. Louis. Miss Akins wrote poems on the backs of post office circulars in her father's office in the southwest corner of the Old Post Office (Eighth and Olive Streets).

Some of these early poems were published in William Marion Reedy's (q.v.) *Mirror*. Her early plays were produced at Cicardi's restaurant at Euclid Ave. and Delmar Blvd. She also wrote the novel, *Declassée*, in the Old Post Office. (Mr. Akins must have been an undemanding employer.)

Miss Akins left St. Louis in the early 1920's and won the Pulitzer Prize for drama in 1935 with her play, *The Old Maid*.

SALLY BENSON

Sarah Mahala Redway Smith Benson grew up at 5135 Kensington Ave. in the home of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. R. Smith. She was called the "female Booth Tarkington" for her "Junior Miss" stories in *The New Yorker* magazine, but she and the Kensington Avenue address became even more famous after she wrote the play, *Meet Me in St. Louis*, about the 1904 World's Fair. It was later made into a successful movie.

The "boy next door," a prominent character in her play, was the subject of one of Judy Garland's songs in the movie. It included the lines, "I live at 5135 Kensington Avenue and he lives at 5133." (There was no such number, but it was necessary for the rhyme.)

In reality, the boy next door was the late Stanley Blewett Wagoner, who persuaded Sarah to help him derail a streetcar when she was six and he was fourteen. He grew up to be a building contractor in St. Louis and a solid enough citizen to attend, as Mrs. Benson's guest, the opening of *Meet Me in St. Louis* when the movie premiered here.

In an interview in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in 1960, Mrs. Benson remarked that she often bet on horse races near her home in California. One of her favorites was Odeon, which she backed repeatedly because he reminded her of the old Odeon Theater in St. Louis.

KATE CHOPIN – 1851-1904

Kate Chopin was born in St. Louis, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas O'Flaherty. She graduated from the Sacred Heart Convent here in 1868. Following her marriage, she moved to Louisiana, where she became well acquainted with the Creole lore which later formed the basis for many of her stories.

After her husband's death in 1882, she and her children returned to St. Louis. She lived and wrote at 3317 Morgan Ave., now Delmar Blvd., publishing children's stories and stories for adults in *Harper's* and *Century* magazines.

Her novel, *Awakening*, was published in 1898, scandalizing a horrified public. (It told the story of a married woman in love with a man *not her husband!*) So much personal criticism was heaped on Mrs. Chopin that she lost heart

for writing for a time, and publishers were hesitant to bring out her work. She was beginning to rebuild her career when, following a hot day at the 1904 World's Fair, she suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and died.

WINSTON CHURCHILL

Born in St. Louis in 1871, Winston Churchill graduated from the Naval Academy in 1894. He served as editor of the *Army and Navy Journal*, then as managing editor of *Cosmopolitan*. After a year at each of these posts, he devoted himself entirely to creative writing. He won high rank for his historical fiction and portraits of contemporary life. He wrote *The Crisis*, *The Crossing*, *Richard Carvel* and other novels. *The Crisis*, published in 1901, most endeared him to successive generations of St. Louisans.

Here is part of his description of the historical Bissell house on the river:

"Presently the woodland hid from her sight the noble river shining far below, and Virginia pulled Vixen between the gateposts which marked the entrance to her aunt's place, Bellegarde. Half a mile through the cool forest, the black dirt of the driveway flying from Vixen's hoofs, and there was the Colfax house on the edge of the gentle slope; and beyond it the orchard, and the blue grapes withering on the vines — and beyond that fields of yellow stubble. The silver smoke of a steamboat hung in wisps above the water . . ." (*The Crisis*, p. 65).

PIERRE JEAN DE SMET, S.J.

The best-known Jesuit of the nineteenth century, Belgian-born Pierre Jean De Smet came to St. Louis to complete his theological studies in 1823, and made it his headquarters until his death 50 years later.

He visited almost every Indian tribe of the Pacific Northwest, and he represented the United States government in seeking peace with the hostile Sioux. Early in his work in the West, he published a volume of letters describing events and scenes on his first journey to Oregon (1843). This and three other books made his name a byword in this country and Europe. He wrote good English for a non-native, fine

French and excellent Flemish, his native tongue. His works were widely translated into other languages.

In his late years he frequently assisted the pastor of St. John Nepomuk Church, Twelfth St. and Lafayette Ave., the first Bohemian Church established outside the Kingdom of Bohemia.

CHARLES DICKENS

The English novelist Charles Dickens visited St. Louis in 1842, and had several pages on the city in his *American Notes*. While he had caustic references to the inferiority of most things in the United States, he wrote with reasonable detachment about many aspects of St. Louis — except the weather. He was impressed, among other buildings, by St. Francis Xavier Church, then going up at Ninth and Christy Sts., one block north of Washington Ave.

"We went to a large hotel, called the Planter's House: built like an English hospital, with long passages and bare walls, and sky-lights above the room-doors for the free circulation of air. There were a great many boarders in it; and as many lights sparkled and glistened from the windows down into the street below, when we drove up, as if it had been illuminated on some occasion of rejoicing. It is an excellent house, and the proprietors have most bountiful notions of providing the creature comforts. Dining alone with my wife in our own room one day, I counted fourteen dishes on the table at once."

THEODORE DREISER — 1871-1945

Before he began his career as a pioneering novelist, Theodore Dreiser lived in St. Louis from about 1892-94 when he was writing for the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* and later for the *St. Louis Republic*. His residence here was listed as 708 Pine St.

Although he was in St. Louis a comparatively short time, Dreiser devotes much of his autobiography, *A Book About Myself*, (1922) to the city and his experiences here. Following is a quotation, typical of many:

"Just at this time (1892) St. Louis seemed to be upon the verge of change and improvement. An old

section of mansions bordering on the business center was rapidly giving way to a rabble of small stores and cheap factories. Already several new buildings of the Chicago style of skyscraper were either contemplated or in process of construction (Wainwright Bldg. 1890-92) . . . There was a new depot contracted for, one of the finest in all the country, so I was told, which was to house all the roads entering the city. A new City Hall was being talked of, an enormous thing-to-be. Out in the west end, where progress seemed the most vital, were new streets and truly magnificent residence "places," parked and guarded areas these, in which were ranged many residences of the ultra-rich. The first time I saw one of these "places" I was staggered by its exclusive air and the beauty and even grandeur of some of the great houses in it. Here were great gray or white or brownstone affairs, bright, almost gaudy, with great verandas, astonishing doorways, flights of stone steps, heavily and richly draped windows, immense carriage-houses, parked and flowered lawns." (pp. 100-101).

T. S. ELIOT

T. S. Eliot, winner of a Nobel Prize for poetry in 1948, was born in 1888 at 2635 Locust St., on land owned by his grandfather, William Greenleaf Eliot. The elder Eliot, also a well-known literary figure and author of *The Discipline of Sorrow*, was a founder of Washington University and of Mary Institute. Later the family moved to 4446 Westminster Place, near the Wednesday Club, where his mother read her poetry.

Marquis Childs, (in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Feb. 16, 1964) quotes a letter which Eliot wrote to him in 1930. Eliot said that he spent his first sixteen years in the house on Locust St. until he went away to school in 1905, returning to St. Louis thereafter only for vacations and visits. He first went to school at "a Mrs. Lockwood's, which was a little way out beyond Vandeventer Place. The river made a deep impression on me; and it was a great treat to be taken down to the Eads bridge in flood time." He attended Smith Academy here and wrote the class poem for graduation. He wrote to Childs: "Missouri and the Mississippi have made a deeper impression on me than any other part of the world."

ARCHIVES



ELIOT HOUSE, 4446 WESTMINSTER PLACE

One such impression is evident in his "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." A William Prufrock had a furniture store at 1104 Olive Street. Eliot borrowed his last name for the main character in the poem.

The influence of St. Louis lingered into Eliot's Cambridge days in the 1920's. I. A. Richards recalls that Eliot visited him, bringing records. Eliot especially delighted in one called "All Aboard for St. Louis."

EUGENE FIELD—1850-1895

Eugene Field, known as the "poet of childhood," was born at 634 S. Broadway in St. Louis in a house which was saved from demolition in 1934 and restored as a museum. Although best known as the author of *Little Boy Blue*, *Wynken, Blynken and Nod* and many other fondly-remembered children's poems, his livelihood was a career in journalism which began in St. Louis in 1873.

He worked successively on newspapers in St. Joseph, Kansas City, Denver and Chicago, where he died. It was on the *Chicago Morning News* that he contributed his popular column known as "Sharps and Flats." He wrote prodigiously about anything that interested him in a kind of "personal" journalism style no longer in vogue. In his own time, he was as well-known for the caustic wit of his newspaper writing as he was for the sentimental poems. As a St. Louis newspaperwoman said, "He dipped one pen in sugar, the other in astringent."

Field was never a serious student and was an incurable practical joker all his life. At his third (and last) college, the University of Missouri at Columbia, he seems to have spent more time leading raids on the president's wine cellar, painting the president's horse the school colors, and firing the school's landmark cannons at midnight, than he did in acquiring scholastic credits.

The Eugene Field House contains a wealth of mementoes of the poet — original manuscripts, books, furniture, many of his personal effects and even some of the toys that inspired many of his poems. (Cover illustration.)

U. S. GRANT and WILLIAM T. SHERMAN

Two Civil War figures, soldiers but also writers, have St. Louis associations. One was William T. Sherman, who is buried in Calvary Cemetery. Sherman was operating a street car company here at the outbreak of the war, and after it probably wrote at least part of his *Memoirs of General William T. Sherman* in his home at 921 North Garrison Ave. The book was subsequently reprinted with an introduction by the English military expert, Liddell Hart, who found Sherman's story a model for the strategy and tactics of mechanized warfare and asserted it influenced Rommel and other German commanders of World War II.

The other soldier-author was U. S. Grant, who lived here from 1854 to 1860. Dismal failures in local efforts — farming, real estate, clerking, running for county engineer — appropriately forecast his subsequent image as the most inept of all the presidents.

Yet Grant deserved better than this, and as a writer he is especially arresting. He also wrote his memoirs. Mark Twain appraised the book as the most remarkable of its kind since Caesar's *Commentaries*, and Edmund Wilson found it like *Walden* or *Leaves of Grass* — a unique expression of the national will. The circumstances of the writing were even more remarkable. Ruined by faithless friends and dying of cancer of the throat, Grant wrote the book in a race against death in an effort to provide for his family. He dictated until he lost his voice, wrote out the rest, and died a week after the completion of the eleven-month project. He achieved his goal. The book sold 200,000 copies and netted almost half a million dollars.

EMILY HAHN

Emily Hahn, as a living female author, is excused from having the year of her birth disclosed. As a child (sometime in the past), she lived with her parents and five siblings at 4858 Fountain Ave. The family moved to Chicago when she was 15.

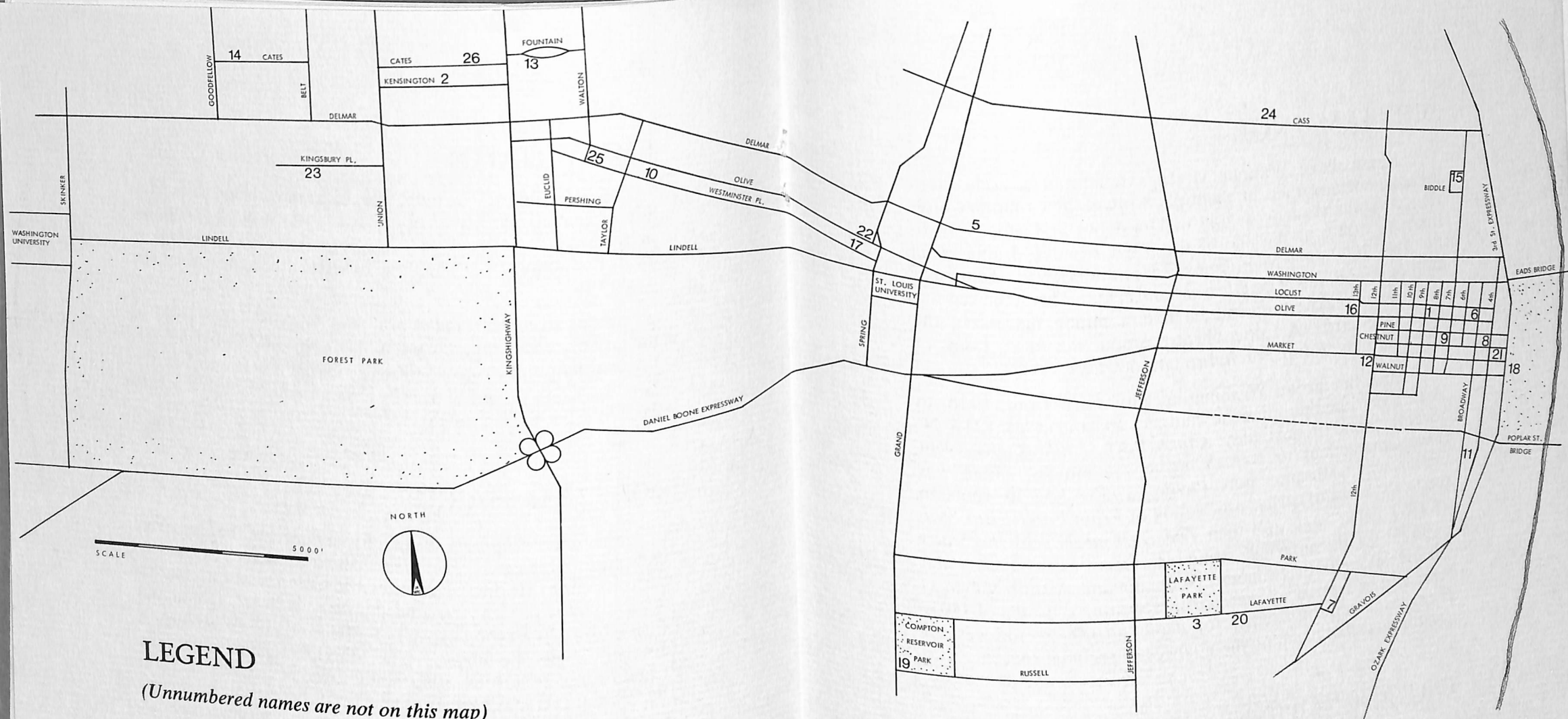
Prior to and during World War II, Miss Hahn lived in the Orient. *The Soong Sisters*, a biography, and *China To Me*, her autobiography, were written from her experiences in the Far East. She presently lives in London and writes frequently for *The New Yorker* magazine.

WILLIAM HARRIS

An interesting part of the city's intellectual heritage was the philosophical movement which flourished here in the late 19th century. Its literary form was the Journal of Speculative Philosophy which carried contributions by Hegel, Fichte and Schelling from Europe as well as Americans of the stature of Royce, James and Dewey. The movement grew out of the organization of the St. Louis Philosophical Society in 1866 by William Harris, Superintendent of Schools. An extraordinarily vital force, the Society attracted visitors such as Ralph Waldo Emerson to its meetings. No history of American philosophy would be complete without mention of its work.

FANNIE HURST

Fannie Hurst, novelist, short story and movie writer, lived with her family at 5641 Cates Ave. and attended Central High School. While she was a student at Washington University, from which she graduated in 1909, she submitted some of her writings to William Marion Reedy (q.v.), who published it in the *Mirror*. Her novels have been translated into 10 languages.



WILLIAM INGE

Kansas-born William M. Inge taught in a midwestern high school and then at Stephens College in Columbia after receiving his Master's degree in Dramatics at Peabody Institute. In 1943, at the age of thirty, he became drama critic for the *St. Louis Star-Times*. He interviewed Tennessee Williams and saw *The Glass Menagerie*. This renewed his interest in playwriting and he had a minor success in the Dallas Theatre. A Little Theatre production in St. Louis of a second play, *Front Porch*, brought no raves.

Inge taught at Washington University from 1946 to 1949. During that time he had an apartment at 1213 N. Seventh St. His next play, *Come Back, Little Sheba*, went from Connecticut to New York to the movies. Inge was on his way. His next play *Picnic* (1953) had its roots in the less successful earlier production of *Front Porch*. *Bus Stop* (1955) came next; and then *The Dark at Top of the Stairs* (1957). This amazing string of successes won for him acclaim along with Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller as "the Big Three of American playwriting" in the 1950's. Inge has a natural facility for depicting life in mid-western small towns and catching the nuances of regional speech.

ORRICK JOHNS

A pioneer of the new poetry movement in America, editor of *New Masses* and director of the Federal Writers Project in New York, Orrick Johns left an interesting behind-the-scenes picture of St. Louis during the early years of this century in *Time of Our Lives*. It is part autobiography and part biography of his father, George Johns, who was widely known as editor of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* editorial page.

Orrick attended Dozier School, Central High School and the University of Missouri, whose faculty did not quite match the high school faculty, he thought, on a Humanist plane. He won early acclaim for his poetry, and eventually published two volumes of it, *Asphalt* and *White Plume and Other Poems*.

From *Time of Our Lives* (p. 169):

"The established old restaurants were still there: Faust's, the Southern Hotel, the Planter's House, mentioned by Dickens in his travel notes, and McTague's, the favorite headquarters of William Marion Reedy. They fed the well-to-do and smart people of the town, the famous actors, lecturers and writers . . . Within this small theatre and restaurant district, between Ninth St. and Fourth St. and two blocks wide, it was still possible to meet, evening after evening, all the prominent people of the city. St. Louis was not yet a sprawling metropolis of many strangers and no common gathering places . . ."

JOSEPHINE JOHNSON

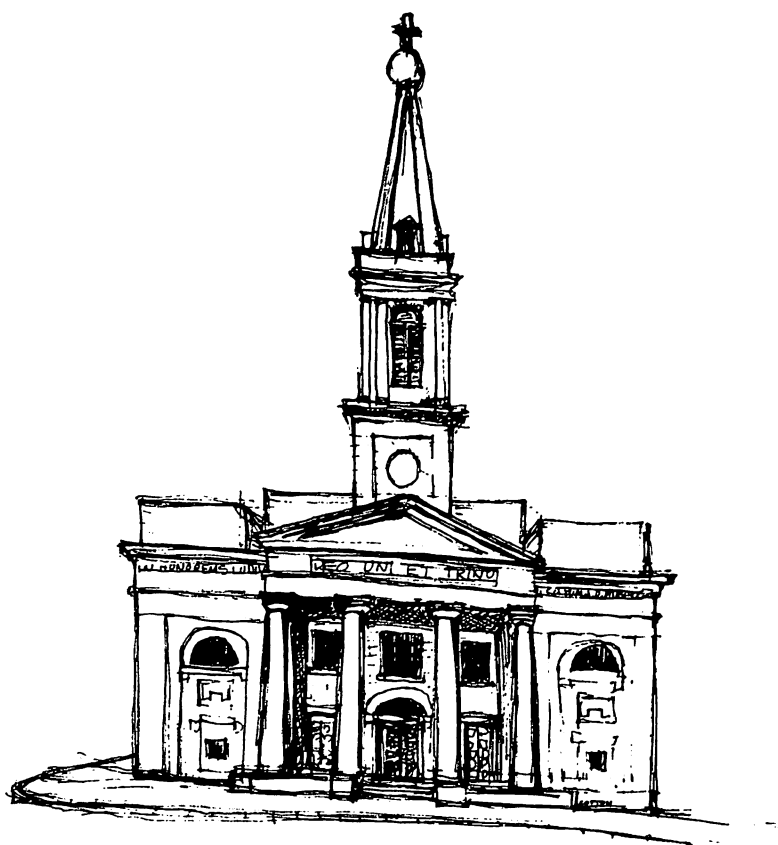
Josephine Johnson, a native of Kirkwood, was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 1934 for her brilliant first novel, *Now in November*. She is also well-known for her poems and short stories and for her contributions to *Harpers*, *Atlantic Monthly* and many other magazines.

Miss Johnson attended Washington University for three years and studied art in St. Louis. One of her hobbies here was painting children's murals, examples of which can be seen at the Mission Free School, 369 N. Taylor Ave.

FREDERICK P. KENKEL

Called by a modern historian "a man of rare talent and dedication," St. Louis editor Frederick Kenkel had the distinction of being the first Catholic editor to anticipate the social reform policy advocated by Pope Pius XI in the great encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*.

As editor of the *Central-Blatt and Social Justice Review*, Kenkel promoted a wide variety of social reforms for over thirty years. He wrote well in both German and English, and gradually changed a predominantly German language monthly magazine into an all-English publication.



OLD CATHEDRAL, BASILICA OF ST. LOUIS, FOOT OF WALNUT ST.

PETER RICHARD KENRICK

Bishop Kenrick was the man who made the Catholics of Europe aware of the intellectual stature of the American hierarchy. Born in Dublin, he came to Philadelphia in his early years, then accepted Bishop Rosati's invitation to assist him in St. Louis. He came here in 1841, became Bishop at Rosati's death in 1843, and Archbishop in 1847. He held this post until his retirement in 1895. He died in 1896.

His early writings, controversial and devotional, were done before his arrival in St. Louis. His greatest work after this was a published speech, distributed but never given, on the infallibility of the church councils. He did not build the Old Cathedral, but paid for it, mostly by astute handling of church properties. He developed self-help programs for poor immigrants.

MARIANNE MOORE

Marianne Moore, recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for poetry, was born in Kirkwood in 1887, and lived in the St. Louis area until she was 16. A prolific writer, she has won the Bollingen and many other awards for her poetry. In 1955 she became a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

In the introduction to her Pulitzer Prize winner, *Collected Poems*, T. S. Eliot said: "My conviction has remained unchanged for the last 14 years that Miss Moore's poems form part of the small body of durable poetry written in our time . . ."

Miss Moore also has a volume translated from the French and a book of essays to her credit. She is said to have written in a letter "I cannot think of a city more cultured than St. Louis."

FRANCIS PARKMAN

This Boston-born historian chose as his life work the writing of the story of the French in America. He graduated from Harvard in 1844, made several trips to Europe and lived for a time among the Indians of the Northwest. He had rare powers as an investigator, and consummate literary ability. He was elected to the hall of fame in 1915.

In St. Louis, on a journey west that was commemorated in *The Oregon Trail*, he met and hired Henri Chatillon, the great hunter, who later made his permanent residence here. Parkman's description of Chatillon is magnificent:

"Foremost rode Henry Chatillon, our guide and hunter, a fine athletic figure, mounted on a hardy gray Wyandot pony . . . His knife was stuck in his belt; his bullet-pouch and powder-horn hung at his side, and his rifle lay before him, resting against the high pommel of his saddle . . . He was born in a little French town near St. Louis, and from the age of 15 years had been constantly in the neighborhood of the Rocky Mountains . . .

"No better evidence of the intrepidity of his temper could be asked than the common report that he had killed more than 30 grizzly bears. He was a proof of what unaided nature will sometimes do. I have never, in the city or in the wilderness, met a better man than my true-hearted friend, Henry Chatillon." (pp. 14-18).

EMIL PREETORIUS

Like Carl Schurz, a refugee from the Rhineland after the abortive revolution of 1848-49, Emil Preetorius came directly to St. Louis. He espoused the cause of Abraham Lincoln and the Republican Party, but seeing the radical Republicans growing strong in Missouri, he worked for moderate policies.

Early in 1864, at the age of 37, he took charge of the editorial columns of the *Westliche Post*. Preetorius brought the paper into leadership of the liberal Republican Party in Missouri and fought the disenfranchisement of those who had sympathized with the South. As editor of the *Westliche Post* he attained high standards of journalism.

EDWARD and ARTHUR PREUSS

Dr. Edward Preuss, German-born Lutheran lay theologian of distinction in his early years became, late in life, an equally famous Catholic theologian. He edited the German-language daily, *Amerika*, in St. Louis, from 1878 to 1902.

Arthur Preuss, his son, came to rival and succeed his father as a lay theologian. He published *The Fortnightly Review* from 1905 to 1935, served as literary editor of B. Herder Book Co. of St. Louis, translated three many-volumed theological text books from German, and wrote three books of his own.

JOSEPH PULITZER - 1847-1911

Joseph Pulitzer was a distinguished American journalist who began his career in St. Louis on the *Westliche Post* in 1865, a year after immigrating to this country from his native Hungary. He founded the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in 1879; four years later he acquired the *New York World*, which became one of the outstanding newspapers of its day under his leadership.

In his will, Mr. Pulitzer established the renowned Pulitzer Prizes, presented annually for outstanding achievements

in letters and journalism. News photography and music have since been added to the list of the awards which are made by Columbia University.

The Pulitzer residence at 2648 Locust St. is no longer standing.

WILLIAM MARION REEDY

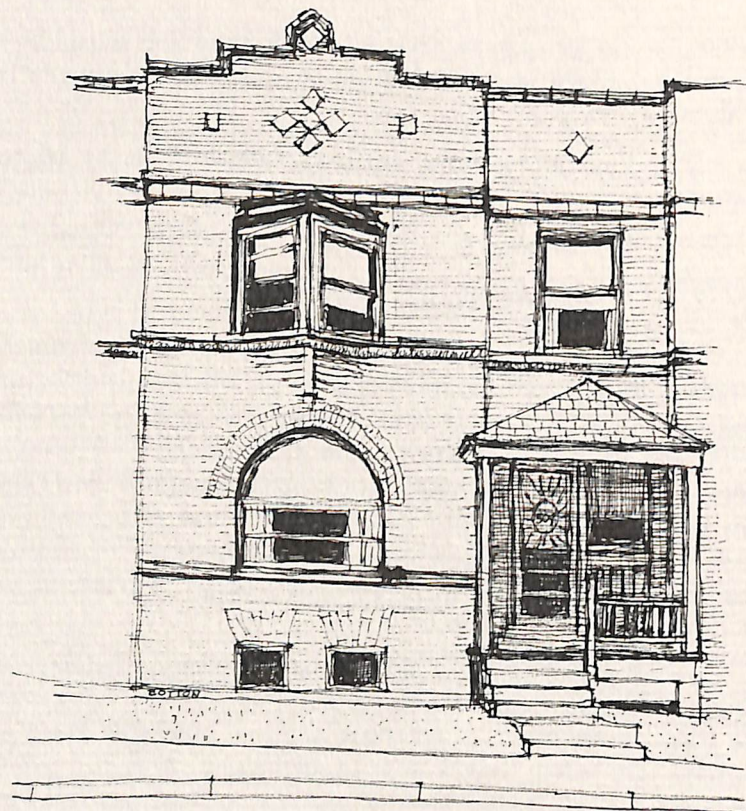
"Our town had its authentic great man, William Marion Reedy. Reedy was the only figure to give St. Louis a literary character in the eyes of the rest of the country, between 1900 and 1920 . . . During those years Reedy had become known to every critic and editor in the English language. His reputation had spread abroad to London and Australia, and before his death he belonged less to his own city than to the world . . ." Thus wrote poet and editor, Orrick Johns, in *Time of Our Lives*. (pp. 170).

After a boyhood in Kerry Patch, Reedy attended St. Louis University. He edited a weekly magazine, *The Mirror*. He had a wide range of interests and a remarkable sense of humor. He never feared to take an unique position on any social or cultural issue. His successive marriages proved sensations in their time.

Reedy had an eye for talented new writers. He first published the poetry of Edgar Lee Masters in 1914. Eventually these pieces formed the *Spoon River Anthology*. Reedy published the poetry of Edna St. Vincent Millay, Vachel Lindsay, Carl Sandburg and Vincent Starret before these writers had gained wide recognition. Two biographies of the man have appeared in the last decade, attesting the lasting interest in his personality and work.

One of William Marion Reedy's many pithy comments on his times:

"I'll bet that not one of several thousand climbers now in the Alps has more excitement . . . than I have when George Johns takes me home in his Ford machine. Jack Kearney alludes to it irreverently as a road louse. That machine can get up on its hind wheels and do the tango better than any debutante . . ."



HOUSE AT 509 N. SPRING

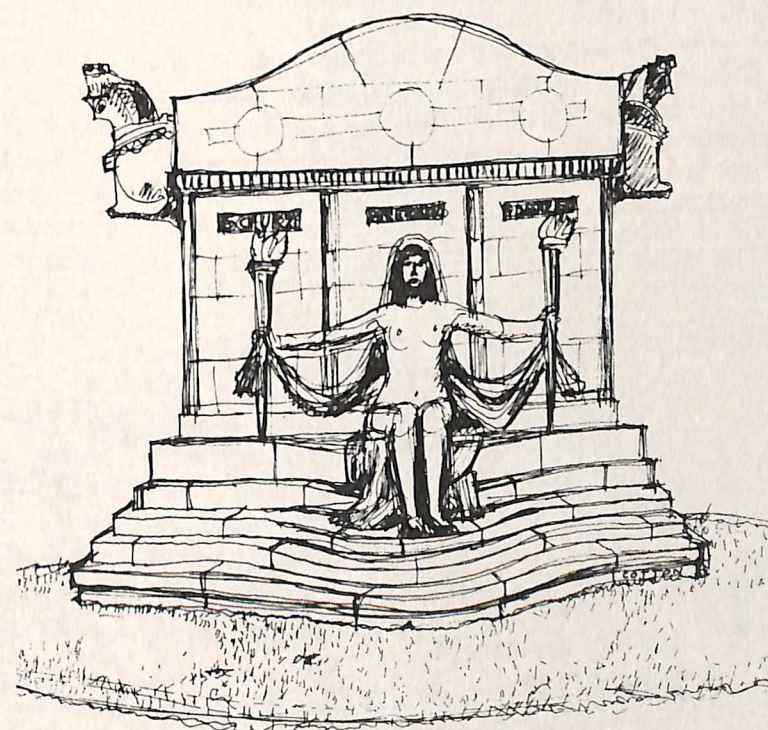
"But the auto has its good points. It stops of its own initiative at places like Cafferata's and Cicardi's. I've known it to take four hours to pass a given point . . . I do not expect ever to see anything more stately than Johns at the wheel in front of Cafferata's, with a porter filling up the tank from a silver champagne cooler.

"I though the record was made when Julius Strauss, taking Elbert Hubbard out to my house, his machine going dry, filled it up with nine bottles of beer, four and one-half of Budweiser and four and one-half of Falstaff. (If you want to live at peace in St. Louis, you don't dare publicly prefer one of those brands to the other.)"

CARL SCHURZ

Minister to Spain, Union General, Senator from Missouri, and Secretary of the Interior under President Hayes, Carl Schurz had a most active public career that included several stints in journalism. In 1867 he served as co-editor with Emil Preetorius of the St. Louis *Westliche Post*.

Schurz fled his native Rhineland because of Prussian oppression of the German liberal movement during 1848-49. A man of great personal charm and commanding presence, he left a wide literary legacy of speeches, letters, pamphlets, essays, and a two volume *Life of Henry Clay* (1887).



SCHURZ-PREETORIUS-DAENZER MONUMENT "NAKED TRUTH",
COMPTON HILL RESERVOIR PARK, GRAND & RUSSELL

ADA, ELIZABETH and SHIRLEY SEIFERT

The three Seifert sister authors all have lived in the St. Louis area for substantial periods of time. Shirley, who graduated from Central High School and Washington University, now lives in Kirkwood.

Of the three sisters, she has drawn the most heavily on St. Louis in her writing. At least four of her novels have a St. Louis background. In addition, she wrote *Key to St. Louis*, part of a national series of guidebooks, and a history of Grace Episcopal Church in Kirkwood.

HERBERT SIMMONS

Herbert Simmons was 26 years old when he won the 1957 Houghton-Mifflin Award for his novel, *Corner Boy*. Born in St. Louis, he was a football letterman at Sumner High School. Following a year spent studying journalism at Lincoln University, Jefferson City, he returned to St. Louis to attend Washington University. Parts of *Corner Boy* were written in a course at Washington taught by Jarvis Thurston.

SARA TEASDALE - 1884-1933

The Teasdale family lived at 3668 Lindell Blvd. and then moved to 38 Kingsbury Place, both houses having been designed by the young poet's mother. Sara's private suite of rooms on the second floor of the latter house was described in her biography by Margaret Haley Carpenter. Guests were admitted by appointment through a separate entrance to the apartment, where Sara worked, slept and frequently dined alone.

Vachel Lindsay fell in love with her poems and later courted her in New York. However she married Ernest R. Filsinger in 1914. According to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (2-16-64), Miss Teasdale was one of the many young writers first published in William Marion Reedy's *Mirror*. She is buried in Bellefontaine Cemetery here.

Her poem "Sunset (St. Louis)" describes the experience, familiar to many pre-jet age St. Louisans, of returning to the city by train:

"Against the sunset, water-towers and steeples
Flickered with fire up the slope to westward;
And old warehouses poured their purple shadows
Across the levee."

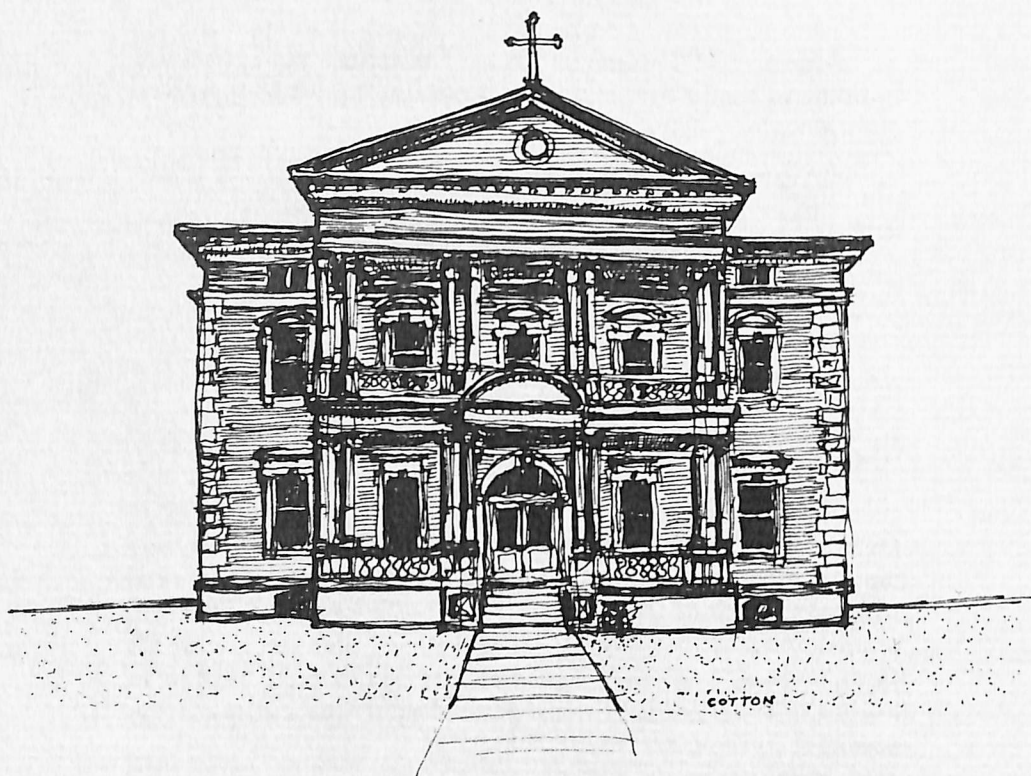
MARK TWAIN (Samuel Clemens)

According to McCune Gill in his pamphlet, "Mark Twain in St. Louis," Samuel Clemens and his brother Orion came as young men from Hannibal to St. Louis and worked on the St. Louis *Evening News and Intelligencer* on Third St. Samuel lived with a family named Pavey and later with his brother-in-law and sister, Mr. and Mrs. William A. Moffett in houses on Pine and on Locust Sts. Moffett was a commission merchant in the city.

Fascinated by the river, in 1856 Clemens took steps to make his career on the Mississippi. In his *Autobiography* he says:

"I went to Horace Bixby" (of St. Louis) "and asked him to make a pilot out of me. He said he would do it for five hundred dollars, one hundred dollars cash in advance. So I steered for him up to St. Louis, borrowed the money from my brother-in-law and closed the bargain."

In 1859 Clemens got his license as a pilot and is listed in the St. Louis Directory for that year as living on the south side of Locust between Eighth and Ninth. (the present site of the Old Post Office.) In *Life on the Mississippi* he frequently refers to St. Louis as it was in those days and makes uncomplimentary comments about the muddy drinking water available in the Southern Hotel. Mr. Gill says that Clemens "hoped to live in St. Louis and follow the river the rest of his days."



JAMES CLEMENS, JR. MANSION, 1849 CASS AVE.

It is obvious that he did not do so. However, until his marriage in 1870 he touched base with the city frequently, visiting his mother and (by then) widowed sister, whom he supported. On March 25, 1867 he gave his popular Sandwich Islands lecture at the "Mercantile Hall," site of the present Mercantile Library.

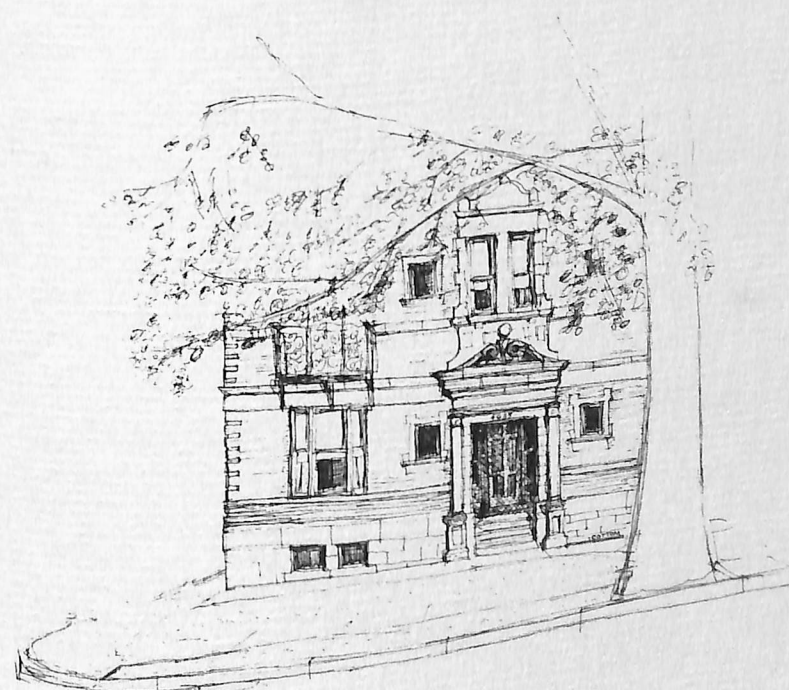
His last visit to St. Louis was in June of 1902 on his way to receive an honorary degree at Missouri University in Columbia. At that time the city of St. Louis named its harbor boat "Mark Twain" in his honor. The *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* reported that he had dinner at the home of his cousin, Dr. J. L. Clemens, at 3958 Washington Ave. That house is now called the Playboy Hotel — *not* to be confused with the Playboy Club.

TENNESSEE (Thomas Lanier) WILLIAMS

Tennessee Williams, winner of two Pulitzer prizes for drama — *A Streetcar Named Desire*, 1947, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, 1955 — was brought to St. Louis from Mississippi during his early grammar school years. He attended Eugene Field Public School, University City High School, the University of Missouri at Columbia and Washington University.

The apartment at 4633 Westminster Place where the family lived in 1921 was the setting for *The Glass Menagerie*, which was awarded the New York Drama Critics Award in 1945. Two of his plays, *Candles to the Sun* and *Fugitive Kind*, were produced by amateur groups in 1937. Some of his plays have been made into highly successful motion pictures. He is also the author of a novel, poetry and short stories.

In an autobiographical sketch in *Twentieth Century Authors*, Williams says that it was in St. Louis that he learned that there are two kinds of people, rich and poor, and that



APARTMENT HOUSE, 4633 WESTMINSTER PLACE

his family belonged to the latter group. This produced "a shock and rebellion that has grown into an inherent part of my work." For two years he worked for a shoe company here and learned "what it means to be a small wage earner in a hopelessly routine job."

THOMAS C. WOLFE - 1900-1938

Thomas Wolfe was only four years old when his mother brought her children to St. Louis in 1904. She rented a house from Dr. and Mrs. Ozias Paquin at 5095 Fairmont Ave. (now Cates) at the corner of Academy Ave.

She named the house The North Carolina and ran it as a boarding house for visitors to the World's Fair. Grover, Thomas' elder brother, had a job at the Fair. During the summer he contracted typhoid fever and died at the house on Cates.

Despite Thomas' early age, the family re-telling of the story and his own memory kept the circumstances vivid for him. In 1935, before a visit to St. Louis, he wrote his mother asking for all possible details about the location of the house. During the trip he found and visited the old house despite the change in street names. The episode is mentioned in *Look Homeward, Angel* and forms the basis for his short story, "The Lost Boy," published posthumously in *The Hills Beyond*.

In the story he recounts how he at last found "King's Highway" and "saw that it was just a street." He finds the house:

"A graystone front, three-storied, the side red brick and windowed, still with the old arched entrance in the center for the doctor's use.

"There was a tree in front, and a lamp post; and behind and to the side, more trees than he had known there would be. And all the slatey turret gables, going into points, and the two arched windows, in strong stone, in the front room.

"It was all so strong, so solid, and so ugly — and all so enduring and so good, the way he had remembered it . . ."